

Resolution Submission Guidance

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These notes are designed to guide you through completing the resolution submission form. Please ensure you read them before you start working on your resolution. The form is available to complete online or to download at mywi.thewi.org.uk/resolutions.

The power of the WI

With over 180,000 informed and active members, the WI is widely recognised as a powerful force for positive change. Since the first mandate was passed in 1918, the WI has been campaigning and raising awareness on issues of local, national and international concern. The WI has campaigned on important issues such as equal pay, the plight of the honeybee, and climate change. Members are right at the centre of the WI's policy and campaign development. Every issue that the WI campaigns on stems directly from resolutions put forward by WI members, adopted each year at the NFWI Annual Meeting.

The WI exists to give women the opportunity of working together, and of putting into practice our shared ideas to tackle the big issues we can't tackle on our own.

This document contains the following sections:

- 1. Before you start: What is a WI resolution?**
- 2. Submitting a resolution from start to finish**
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1. Before you start: What is a WI resolution?

A resolution is a short statement which call for change bringing to light a matter of general interest or concern, relating to current social, environmental or political issues.

Any WI or federation, as well as the NFWI Board of Trustees, can submit a resolution, as long as it has been voted on and approved.

Once a resolution has been adopted at the Annual Meeting, the NFWI Public Affairs Department turns it into a campaign. Through national and local campaigning, members play a key role in achieving change on important issues.

2. Submitting a resolution from start to finish

I. Start with an idea

Any member can develop a resolution, but only WIs and federations can submit them. So, if you are developing a resolution, you need your WI or federation to support it for it to go forward. A vote must be held within your WI or federation on whether to submit the resolution. If your WI or federation cannot meet, the resolution can be approved by the WI Committee or federation board.

You don't need to be an expert on the issue:

- Choose an issue that you are passionate about
- Carry out some research on why the issue is important
- Be specific about what you want to change
- Call on a particular organisation to do something

This is a great time to seek support or advice from the NFWI Public Affairs team, who are available throughout the process to help you develop your resolution. Just email pa@nfwl.org.uk.

II. Research

Once you have an idea, further research is needed to make sure it is a suitable topic that you can develop into a strong resolution.

- **Check if existing WI resolutions have already covered the issue.**
- **Make sure it fits within the WI's Charitable Objects.** The WI's Charitable Objects can be found in the WI Constitution and guide everything we do as an organisation.
 - To advance the education of women and girls for the public benefit in all areas
 - To promote sustainable development for the public benefit by

- To advance health for the public benefit; and to advance citizenship for the public benefit by the promotion of civic responsibility and volunteering.

You can read more about the objects on MyWI here: <https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/essential-information/the-wis-key-messages>

- **A strong resolution should align with the WI's Strategic Vision.** The WI's Strategic Vision is our five-year strategic plan to be an organisation of choice for all women, building on our past successes and the strength of our current membership and influence to ensure a sustainable and strong future for the WI. This includes five key vision statements:

- Bold and Inspiring
- Growing and Relevant
- Inclusive
- Flexible

Find more details here: <https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/essential-information/nfwi-vision-for-the-future>

- **Consider the selection criteria.** Strong resolutions meet the following criteria:
 - **Timely:** It is not 'yesterday's news'. It is a good time to work on the issue to achieve change, not an issue that is out of date or will be before the resolution process is completed, or where change is unlikely.
 - **Targeted:** The resolution has a clear and realistic objective. It is clear who needs to act to address the issue and what they need to do.
 - **Achievable:** The resolution is calling for something meaningful and sensible that can be achieved.
 - **Partnership potential:** The WI's work will add value to the work of other organisations. The resolution offers the WI an opportunity to work with organisations in partnership to increase the impact of our campaign.
 - **Accurate:** It reflects the current situation and does not use outdated or obsolete information as its basis. It uses information from credible and reliable sources.
 - **PR potential:** There is a potential to gain positive media coverage for the WI that could lead to an increase in membership, perhaps by challenging rather than reinforcing media and public stereotypes about the organisation.
 - **Appropriate:** It fits with the WI's charitable objects, history and ethos.

III. Writing the resolution

Title

The title of the resolution is used to identify it throughout the resolutions process. This is the title that will appear in WI Life when members select the resolution they support the most, and what will identify the resolution as it is voted on at the NFWI Annual Meeting. It is important that the title is clear and that it accurately represents the aims of the resolution. Making your title simple, short and catchy can help members understand what the resolution is about.

Wording

The wording of the resolution is the most important aspect of a resolution. The WI's future campaigning work on the issue will be based on what is mentioned in the wording of the resolution. It is therefore important that you make this as strong and as accurate as possible. The NFWI Public Affairs team will check the wording of all submitted resolutions and may contact any proposers who they believe have submitted resolutions with unclear or ambiguous wording or wording that does not reflect the issue.

When looking at the specific wording of the resolution there are two key rules that you need to follow, so that your resolution is accepted:

- It should not be a statement or comment but should instead call for action by a specified body, such as the Government or all WI members. "*We believe that GM crops should not be grown in the UK until they have been proven safe*" is not appropriate wording for a resolution.
- It should address a single issue. However, it could call for action on a number of aspects of that issue, for example, your resolution could focus on the issue of the lack of affordable housing, and could call on government both to make changes to planning rules to require more affordable homes to be built, and also to bring in financial support for those on low incomes to help them buy a home.

A well-worded resolution should:

1. Outline the issue you want to address. *It should not be too broad as to make it difficult to achieve meaningful change, but also be careful not make it too narrow so that there is enough scope for a national campaign.*
2. Call on a particular organisation to do something *(This could be a national or international body, like the UK government or the United Nations, a private company, or all WI members).*
3. Explain what you want to that group to do *(Do you want them to change their policy, to pass a law, to increase investment? This could be anything that will achieve the aims of the resolution).*
4. State what you would like this to achieve *(It is good to ensure that this is stated in the wording so that members know what the end goal of the campaign would be).*

Please see below for more information on how to structure your resolution wording.

IV. Discuss your idea with your WI

Resolutions must be agreed by a simple majority of members of your WI (51%). Federations can also submit a resolution to the NFWI and need to hold a vote for the federation Board of Trustees to approve it. A simple majority (51%) is required for this too. You need to record the date on which this vote was held.

If, for any reason, it isn't possible to take your resolution to a full meeting, your resolution can instead be approved by the WI Committee.

V. Share the idea with your federation

All resolutions, prior to submission to the NFWI, need to be signed off by your federation, but it can be useful to reach out to your federation at an earlier stage. The Federation Resolution Coordinator might be able to help you with advice on how to strengthen your resolution wording, support with filling in the form or putting you in touch with NFWI to get more advice and guidance.

VI. Approval from federation representative

When your resolution is ready it must be checked by your federation. It can be signed off by either the Resolutions Co-ordinator or federation representative (Federation Chairman or Treasurer). Please check who is nominated to sign off resolution submissions in your federation.

Your federation is only required to check that the wording of the resolution is clear, that the resolution is not repeating an issue on which the WI already has a mandate, and that the resolution does not go against the charitable objects of the NFWI. They cannot refuse to approve a resolution because they disagree with the content or the aims of the resolution.

The deadline for sharing your resolution with your federation for sign-off is **1 September 2024**.

VII. Submit your resolution to the NFWI

Once your resolution has been signed off by the federation, you must submit the resolution to the NFWI by **8 September 2024**. It is the proposer's responsibility to make sure the resolution is submitted to the NFWI, although your federation might prefer to submit it along with other resolutions. Check with your federation how to approach this in advance.

You may submit using our online form on MyWI or by emailing the form to pa@nfwl.org.uk. If you prefer to submit your resolution by post, the signed form should be sent to 104 New Kings Road, London, SW6 4LY. Due to hybrid working, we may not be able to acknowledge postal submissions immediately. Where possible, you are encouraged to submit resolutions electronically.

When submitting using MyWI, the federation representative must separately contact the NFWI Public Affairs team to let us know they have approved it. They can do this by emailing pa@nfwl.org.uk.

If submitting via email, the signature can be provided on a scanned copy of the form or the federation representative can separately email the NFWI.

The NFWI might get in touch about the wording of your resolution before the shortlisting meeting in October, for instance to suggest changes to your wording to make the resolution clearer or stronger.

Following the shortlisting meeting, the NFWI will get in touch with you to inform you of the outcome and whether or not your resolution will be going forward to the shortlist.

3. How to structure the wording of your resolution

Your resolution is unlikely to progress very far if the wording is unclear. To give your resolution the best chance of success, please follow this structure for the wording:

1. Outline the issue you want to address. *It should not be too broad to make it difficult to achieve, meaningful change, but also be careful to not make it too narrow, to allow enough scope to develop a national campaign.*
2. Call on a particular organisation to do something *(This could be a national or international body, like the UK government or the United Nations, a private company, or all WI members).*
3. Explain what you want to that group to do *(Do you want them to change policy, pass a law, increase investment? This could be anything that will achieve the aims of the resolution).*
4. State what you would like this to achieve *(It is good to ensure that this is stated in the wording so that members know what the end goal of the campaign would be).*

A well worded resolution that followed this format:

“There are chronic shortages of midwives. The NFWI calls on the Government to increase investment in the training, employment and retention of midwives in England and Wales to ensure services are adequately resourced and are able to deliver a high standard of care”

1. There are chronic shortages of midwives.
2. The NFWI calls on the Government
3. to increase investment in the training, employment and retention of midwives in England and Wales
4. to ensure services are adequately resourced and are able to deliver a high standard of care

A poorly worded resolution that didn't follow this format:

“This meeting believes that the UK should do more to tackle the issue of incursion into green spaces”

1. The resolution states that incursion into green spaces is the problem, but it's not clear what this actually refers to, or why this is a problem.
2. This calls on the UK to do more but does not state which specific body has the power to carry out the resolution, or who the WI need to influence.
3. “Tackle the issue” is very vague and gives no indication as to what the WI wants to see happen, and what the WI wants the UK to do.

4. This resolution does not mention what the WI would like to achieve with this resolution.

Devolution

An important point to keep in mind when writing your resolution is that the NFWI operates in England, Wales and the Islands. This means that some issues are managed differently in the different countries. A resolution is unlikely to make it through to the shortlist if it only calls for change by a body which works in only one of the countries or addresses an issue which is not relevant to both England and Wales, and ideally the Islands too. You can find a list of powers that are devolved to the Welsh Government [here](#). Further information is available on MyWI.

You can of course submit resolutions relating to international issues or calling for international action.

Non-Public Affairs matters

The NFWI resolutions process determines the WI's public facing campaigns to create change in society. Resolutions cannot be used to call for changes that are internal to the WI, such as organisational or financial changes. Resolutions that are not related to public affairs matters, will not be considered at the shortlist selection meeting. If you are concerned about an internal WI matter, we encourage you to contact the NFWI to raise your concerns or ask for more information.

4. Tips on completing the submission form

Details of the WI or federation submitting the resolution

If you are submitting on behalf of a WI, please add the name of your WI and your federation. If you are submitting on behalf of a federation, just add the name of your federation, leaving the WI space blank.

Once you have submitted the resolution the NFWI may need to get in touch with you about the submission. Please include contact details of the best person to get in touch with. For submissions from a WI this is likely to be your secretary and for submissions from a federation this is likely to be your resolutions co-ordinator.

If your resolution makes it to the NFWI Annual Meeting it will need to be proposed verbally by a member of your WI or federation before it is voted on. Please add the name here of the member who will propose the resolution. This is usually the member who initially proposed the resolution within your WI or federation and the member who is most passionate about the issue.

Supporting information

To support the submission of your resolution, please consider the shortlisting criteria and complete the additional questions on the submission form. You do not need to provide lots of information for these. It is more important that you have considered the points in each section and have answered the questions clearly. Please also check whether the NFWI already has a resolution on the topic by looking at the list of past resolutions (available on My WI).

This additional information is vital for the NFWI Public Affairs team and delegates at the selection meeting to fully understand the intention of your resolution and what it is that you would like to achieve. It is also important for you to think through each of these points to ensure that your submission is as strong as it could be.

5. Further information

For more information to support your resolution submission, please [visit My WI](#) where you will be able to access:

- A timeline of the 2023/24 resolutions process
- An online submission form that can be used instead of the digital form
- [A list of all WI resolutions passed since 1918](#)
- Online training, for an in-depth look at developing a resolution
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Further guidance on devolved issues
- “The WI at 100” – The NFWI’s centenary report looking at 100 years of WI campaigns
- [Recording of Resolution Writing Webinar July 2023](#)

If you have any further questions or would like further support in submitting a resolution, then please do get in touch with the NFWI Public Affairs Department on pa@nfwl.org.uk or 020 7371 9300 ext. 2002

6. The Resolutions process at a glance

Stage 1 – Submissions

Between July and September, WIs and federations submit resolutions about current issues they are concerned about to the NFWI.

Stage 2 – Shortlist

In early autumn, the submitted resolutions are discussed and debated by federation and member delegates and reduced to a shortlist. The shortlist is usually between 5 to 8 resolutions but can be longer or shorter.

Stage 3 - Individual selections

Between November and February, federations and WIs hold meetings to discuss the shortlisted resolutions, giving every member the chance to have their say on the shortlist. Each member casts their individual selection for the resolution they support the most. Selections for each shortlisted resolution are tallied by federations and reported to the NFWI.

Stage 4 – Board of Trustees and WI discussions

The NFWI Board of Trustees reviews the results of the member selections and agrees on the resolutions to go forward to the Annual Meeting. This is usually one resolution, but sometimes more than one is taken forward. These resolutions are then discussed by each WI to determine how they wish their Annual Meeting delegate to vote at the AM.

Stage 5 – WI voting

At the Annual Meeting, delegates hear from the resolution proposer, seconder and experts on the topics. Votes are then cast on the resolution(s) which, if selected, will go on to form the basis of a WI campaign.